

WATCH FOR SCAMS IN FLORENCE'S WAKE

In the wake of widespread damage caused by Hurricane Florence, the Investor Protection Unit (IPU) of the Delaware Department of Justice cautions investors to watch out for opportunistic investment or charitable scams.

The Investor Protection Unit reminds investors to watch for red flags of hurricane-related scams, including unsolicited email, social media messages, crowdfunding pitches or telephone calls promoting investment pools or bonds to help storm victims, water-removal or purification technologies, electricity-generating devices and distressed real estate remediation programs. Scam artists may linger long after the storm has passed to prey on victims who anticipate receiving large lump-sum insurance settlements for damaged property and other losses.

"Natural disasters bring out the best and worst in people. While news stemming from Hurricane Florence has rightfully focused on the tireless efforts of first responders and neighbors helping neighbors, we know from experience that financial predators will seek to profit from the misfortune of others," said Attorney General Matt Denn. "Unsolicited investment offers seeking to capitalize on the aftermath of Hurricane Florence should be approached with extreme caution." The IPU also cautions about fraudulent charitable solicitations that prey on the goodness of people seeking to help those in need.

"There will be fraudulent solicitations for charities in Florence's wake," Denn said, "and donors are reminded to do their research. As with any charitable donation, those who want to contribute to relief efforts should send contributions to organizations that are registered properly with state

authorities and with an established track record of getting donations to victims.”

The Investor Protection Unit offered three quick tips to help investors avoid disaster-related scams:

- Delete unsolicited emails or social media messages and hang up on aggressive cold callers promoting hurricane-related investments, especially those from small companies touting unproven or new technologies or products.
- Use common sense. Claims of guaranteed returns or low/no investment risk are classic red flags. Every investment involves some degree of risk.
- Do your homework. Contact your state regulator to check that both the seller and investment are licensed and registered. If not, they may be operating illegally. Contact the Investor Protection Unit at (302) 577-8424, or by [email](#).